

Message Text

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SUBJECT: ISSUES FOR MEETING OF JOINT COMMERCIAL COMMISSION-
TRADE MISSIONS

REF: MOSCOW'S A-84, MARCH 14, 1974

1. SUMMARY. RECENT EXPERIENCE WITH VISITS OF U.S. TRADE MISSIONS, BOTH COMMERCE-SPONSORED AND IOGA VARIETIES, TO USSR DEMONSTRATES NEED FOR CLARIFICATION OF HANDLING OF THESE MISSIONS ON BOTH SIDES. IN REPAIR, EMBASSY PRESENTED SOME THOUGHTS ON HOW U.S. SIDE COULD IMPROVE ITS OPERATIONS IN TRADE MISSION AREA. THIS MESSAGE ALSO POINTED TO NEED FOR EXPLICIT SOVIET COMMITMENT TO CONCEPT OF SENDING U.S. TRADE MISSIONS TO USSR. UPCOMING MEETING OF US-USSR JOINT COMMERCIAL COMMISSION OFFERS APPROPRIATE OCCASION FOR DISCUSSION OF THIS QUESTION. END SUMMARY

2. ALTHOUGH ONE MIGHT EXPECT OPPOSITE TO BE THE CASE, RECENT EXPERIENCE WITH U.S. TRADE MISSIONS TO USSR INDICATES INCREASING LACK OF COOPERATION FROM USSR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY IN ASSISTING EMBASSY IN ARRANGING PROGRAMS FOR MISSIONS. REASONS FOR THIS ATTITUDE WERE DISCUSSED REPAIR. BASIC PROBLEM, FROM EMBASSY'S POINT OF VIEW, IS THAT WE NEED SOVIET "SPONSOR" FOR TRADE MISSIONS, AND UP TO NOW THE CHAMBER HAS SEEMED TO BE ONLY PLACE TO TURN.

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3. A NEW ASPECT OF THIS PROBLEM, WHICH WAS NOT DISCUSSED REPAIR, HAS ARISEN IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRANSFER OF THE CHAMBER OFFICIAL WHO HAS GENERALLY SERVED AS ACTIONOFFICER FOR TRADE MISSIONS, V.V. OSIPOV, TO STAFF OF US-USSR TRADE AND ECONOMIC COUNCIL'S MOSCOW OFFICE. REFLECTING IT GENERAL DISTASTE FOR TRADE MISSION BUSINESS AND VIEW THAT OSIPOV IS ONLY CHAMBER OFFICIAL WHO CAN DO THIS WORK (A VIEW NOT CONFIRMED BY EMBASSY'S EXPERIENCE), CHAMBER HAS APPARENTLY INFORMALLY FLOATED IDEA WITH CONNOR OF TRADE/ECONOMIC COUNCIL THAT COUNCIL TAKE OVER RESPONSIBILITY FOR ORGANIZING PROGRAMS OF TRADE MISSIONS. THIS DOES NOT STRIKE US AS GOOD IDEA. WE SEE DIFFICULTY IN GIVING TRADE/ECONOMIC COUNCIL, A PRIVATE ORGANIZATION, RESPONSIBILITY FOR EITHER COMMERCE-SPONSORED OR IOGA MISSIONS. IF EMBASSY'S COMMERCIAL OFFICE WERE OBLIGED TO WORK THROUGH TRADE/ECONOMIC COUNCIL'S OFFICE IN ORGANIZING PROGRAMS FOR TRADE MISSIONS, THIS WOULD ADD ADDITIONAL LAYER BETWEEN COMMERCIAL OFFICE AND SOVIET ECONOMIC ESTABLISHMENT, WHICH WOULD BE MONZ UNDESIRABLE, AND WOULD ALSO TEND REDUCE STATUS AND ROLE OF NEW OFFICE.

4. RECOMMENDATION: TO IMPROVE SITUATION, EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT U.S. SIDE AT UPCOMING JOINT COMMISSION MEETING MAKE PRESENTATION ALONG FOLLOWING LINES: (1) WE BELIEVE THAT EXCHANGE OF TRADE MISSIONS BETWEEN U.S. AND USSR IS VALUABLE TOOL IN DEVELOPING ECONOMIC COOPERATION. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE HAS ACTIVE PROGRAM IN THIS AREA AND WE WOULD WELCOME SIMILAR SOVIET MISSIONS IN THE U.S. WE HOPE THAT SOVIET SIDE SHARES OUR VIEW AS TO THE UTILITY OF THESE MISSIONS. (2) OUR RECENT EXPERIENCE WITH U.S. TRADE MISSIONS VISITING MOSCOW HAS REVEALED PROBLEMS WHICH HAVE TENDED TO REDUCE EFFECTIVENESS OF THESE MISSIONS. IN PARTICULAR, THE U.S. COMMERCIAL OFFICE IN MOSCOW HAS ENCOUNTERED DIFFICULTIES IN ARRANGING SATISFACTORY PROGRAM FOR VISITING TRADE MISSIONS. (3) IN ORDER TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS FOR TRADE MISSIONS, THE U.S. SIDE PROPOSES THAT THE JOINT COMMISSION AGREE ON THE FOLLOWING FORMAT FOR PLANNING THESE VISITS: (A) UPON RECEIPT OF NOTIFICATION FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE THAT ORGANIZATION OF A SPECIFIC TRADE MISSION IS UNDER CONSIDERATION, THE U.S. COMMERCIAL OFFICE IN MOSCOW WILL ARRANGE TO MEET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE U.S. DESK IN THE USSR MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE. (B) ON THE BASIS OF INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE COMMERCIAL OFFICE, THE QINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE WILL DETERMINE WHETHE THERE IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SUFFICIENT INTEREST ON THE SOVIET SIDE IN THE PROPOSED MISSION TO JUSTIFY FURTHER PLANNING. (C) IF ON THE BASIS OF ITS CONSULTATIONS WITH OTHER SOVIET ORGANIZATIONS THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE BELIEVES THAT THERE IS SUFFICIENT INTEREST ON SOVIET SIDE TO JUSTIFY FURTHER PLANNING, THE MINISTRY WILL FACILITATE THE ORGANIZATION OF FURTHER MEETINGS BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF THE U.S. COMMERCIAL OFFICE AND REPRESENTATIVES OF APPROPRIATE SOVIET FOREIGN TRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND MINISTRIES.

AT THESE MEETINGS, THE PROPOSED TRADE MISSION WILL BE DISCUSSED IN GREATER DETAIL AND A FINAL DECISION WILL BE REACHED AS TO WHETHER THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE SHOULD PROCEED WITH PLANS TO SEND THE PROPOSED MISSION TO THE USSR. ASSUMING THAT BOTH SIDES AGREE ON UTILITY OF PROPOSED TRADE MISSION, THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE WILL FACILITATE THE EFFORTS OF THE U.S. COMMERCIAL OFFICE TO ARRANGE APPOINTMENTS FOR MEMBERS OF THE MISSION WITH APPROPRIATE SOVIET ORGANIZATIONS.

5. COMMENT: ABOVE SCENARIO WOULD CUT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY OUT OF THE ACTION, AND DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD BE MUCH TO CHAMBER'S LIKING. CHAMBER'S DISAPPEARANCE FROM TRADE MISSION SCENE WOULD NOT BE MAJOR LOSS, HOWEVER, AS CHAMBER'S ASSISTANCE HAS PROVEN TO BE WEAK REED. IF, HOWEVER, SOVIET SIDE IN JOINT COMMISSION DECLINES ACCEPT PROPOSED SCENARIO AND FAILS TO PRODUCE VIABLE ALTERNATIVE, EMBASSY BELIEVES WE SHOULD FRANKLY ADVISE SOVIETS THAT DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE WILL NOT FIND IT POSSIBLE SPONSOR FURTHER TRADE MISSIONS TO USSR GIVEN FACT THAT SOVIET ORGANIZATIONS APPEAR UN-WILLING TO ASSIST IN MAKING THIS PROGRAM WORTHWHILE.
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